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DODDRIDGE

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Compassion to the Sick recom-
mended and urged,

L. 2.
L. 9

I N A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

N O R T H A M P T O N,

SEPTEMBER 4, 1743.

In Favour of a Design then opening to
erect a COUNTY INFIRMARY there
for the Relief of the Poor Sick and
Lame.

Published at the Request of several who heard it.

By P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.

*Homines ad Deum nullâ Re propius accedunt, quam
Salutem Hominibus dando. Cic. pro Lig. ad fin.*

L O N D O N:

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T O T H E

Right HONOURABLE the
Earl of *HALIFAX*.

MY LORD,



THE Generous and Active Zeal with which You have espoused the *Charity* this Sermon is intended to recommend, and the Affiduity with which You have vouchsafed to preside in
a the

ii DEDICATION.

the *Committee* appointed for ripening the general Scheme, and bringing it into Effect, might justly have intitled Your Lordship to this Application ; had Your various Abilities been much less conspicuous, and the other Parts of Your Character (incomparably more valuable than any Abilities,) been less known to the Author, or less revered by him. Yet I am very sensible, that the plain and hasty Discourse, which I have now the Honour of presenting to Your Lordship, might fear the Review of an Eye so accustomed to all that is eloquent, beautiful, and finished in *Antiquity*, did it not trust to that kind Prejudice, which Your Attachment to its general Design will naturally give You in its Favour.

I AM sensible, how impertinent it would be in me on this Occasion,
to

to give myself a Liberty of saying all the respectful Things, which from my Heart I think of the *Earl of Halifax*, or to imagine, that his general Permission of inscribing this Sermon to him would authorize the doing it. But it would be over-rigorous in Your Lordship, to prohibit my intimating that Pleasure I have shared with so many more discerning Persons than myself, in observing that accurate Judgment, that steady Application, that impartial Equity, and that engaging Address, with which Your Lordship, under the Character of our *Chairman*, has conducted the Counsels and Affairs of the *Committee*. I know, that I speak the Sentiments of several of its Members; and I believe, I speak the Sentiments of all; when I say, that in the Fatigue of that close Attendance, which we have thought it our Duty to give on this

iv DEDICATION.

good Occasion, we have often been relieved by reflecting, as it was most natural to do, on the Benefit which the *Publick* must receive from such Talents, when exerted in the highest Assembly of our Nation. There Your Lordship finds a Sphere of Action more amply proportioned to the Largeness of Your Heart, and suited to that high Sense of Liberty, and benevolent Concern for the general Good, which is the brightest Ornament of *a Peer*, and of *a Briton*.

Go on, my Lord, to shine in this Ornament more and more. Animated by every Principle, which *Humanity*, and *Nobility*, and (what is most humane, and most noble,) true *Christianity* can suggest; go on to exert the distinguished Capacities of Usefulness, with which Providence has blessed You, in such Services,
and

D E D I C A T I O N. V

and by exerting to increase them ;
 and with them to increase that Ve-
 neration and Affection, which every
 worthy Heart will pay You as its
 just Tribute, and that infinitely
 more Important and Divine Plea-
 sure, which Your own will find,
 in the Consciousness of having acted
 well. A Pleasure, indeed worthy
 of the most ardent Pursuit ; and on
 which Heaven sets so high a Value,
 that it allows it not to be treated
 with *by Proxy* ; nor will grant any
 Thing like it, to the most illustri-
 ous Birth, the most ample Fortune,
 or the most elevated Genius, unless
 the Possessor of them all will go to
 the Price of it by a resolute Exer-
 cise of Personal Virtue.

I REJOICE, not for myself alone,
 but for my Country, that our *Civil*,
 and *Sacred Liberty* hath *One such*
Guardian

vi DEDICATION.

Guardian among the *rising Nobles* of our Age: I hope, it has *many*; and I pray God, their Number and their Virtues may be increased; and that where ever they are, they may be rewarded with a rich Variety and a long Succession of External Blessings, joined with that Inward Satisfaction which is inseparable from such a Character.

MAY Your Lordship especially, not only have the sublime Joy of beholding *Great-Britain* distinguished among the Nations by Publick Honour and Prosperity, but see every Thing, which can conduce to Your Personal and Domestick Happiness, added in Private Life! And in particular, when you condescend to turn your Thoughts towards *Northampton*, (a Town under *Hereditary Obligations* to Your Lordship's

DEDICATION. vii

ship's Family, which I hope it will never be so ungrateful as to forget,) may you soon and long have the Satisfaction to see its COUNTY HOSPITAL, which you are now so kindly cherishing in its Infant-Weakness, grown up to full Maturity, and giving more certain Presages of being an extensive Blessing to Generations yet to come !

I SINCERELY congratulate Your Lordship, and the other illustrious *Nobles* and worthy *Gentlemen*, who are exerting themselves in this good Work, on a Capacity of *doing greatly* for its Service, while my narrow Sphere will allow me little more than to *wish it well*. Yet it is a Comfort to me to think, that *this Discourse*, in which (imperfect as it is,) I flatter myself there will be found Traces of an honest and a tender Heart not easily to be counterfeited,

terfeited,

viii DEDICATION.

terfeited, will be some *Memorial* of the Affection with which I have endeavoured to serve it, and at the same Time of the unfeigned and profound Respect with which I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most faithful,

most obedient, and most obliged

humble Servant,

Northampton,
October 8. 1743.

P. Doddridge.



P R E F A C E.



THE great Desire which I have to promote that noble and amiable Charity which is now set on Foot among us, has engaged me to comply with the Request of some of my Friends in publishing this Sermon, which was delivered on too little Notice to allow of much Preparation. But indeed very little Reflection is necessary, where the Arguments in its Favour are so obvious; and little Art can be required to plead a Cause, which, as soon as it is admitted to a short Hearing, speaks so loudly and so eloquently for itself.

The only plausible Objections, which I remember to have heard against it, are these Two:—That the distant Parts of the County can expect little Benefit by it;—and that any private House, which can be taken for the Purposes of a COUNTY HOSPITAL, can bear but little Proportion to what the Necessities of so large a County will require. But I hope, neither of these Objections will be found unanswerable; and if every Objector will do his Part towards removing them, I am sure they cannot be found so.

I apprehend myself to have no Right to speak here of the particular Precautions, which the Committee has taken with regard to the First of these;

but shall refer the Reader to the Statutes of the intended Hospital, when they shall be published, as they quickly will. But it may, and ought to be taken for granted, till the contrary appear, (which I perswade myself it never will,) that the Rules for the Admission of Patients will be so constituted among us, as well as elsewhere, that Patients coming from distant Parts will have some Preference given them, to those that are near Home. And as none but Chronical Cases are like to offer from a Distance, if due Precautions be taken in writing and answering Letters, in the Representation of Cases, and in bringing Patients, I cannot see any Probability of frequent Disappointments. If the contrary be suspected, let Gentlemen, and others, who are willing to act for the Encouragement of the Charity if it be duely ordered, favour us with their Presence at our next general Meeting of Subscribers, and there let them examine what the Committee will then offer on this Head, as well as on others; and if they are not satisfied with what is already adjusted, let them propose any more effectual Methods of making them easy on this Head: They will no doubt be heard with all due Regard, and the Assistance of their Counsels be thankfully acknowledged by all who have the Interest of the Hospital at Heart.

*As for the Second Objection, the Force of it cannot be thoroughly judged of, till the House intended for the Reception of Patients be known, and the projected Alterations in it are examined. If after this it be still insisted upon, that we should build, then let those, who are in that Sentiment, subscribe their respective Benefactions for that Purpose; and there can be no Doubt, but the Work will
be*

be joyfully undertaken, as soon as there appears any Fund so considerable as to render it safe. But in the mean time it would surely be most unreasonable to clamour against any Governours, or Committee, who may be established, for not attempting it, while they have no Stock for so great an Undertaking, in any tolerable Degree proportionable to it. This County, so well cultivated and inhabited, and celebrated for the Seats of so many of the Nobility and Gentry, is capable of doing great Things if it pleases, and may, (like Devonshire,) without feeling any sensible Burthen, command a spacious and commodious Edifice to arise for this Purpose in a few Months; and if no unexpected Providence obstruct it, I know not what should forbid us to hope and expect it. Good Examples are already given, great Patrons are engaged*, and Measures are entered into for soliciting the County in the most prudent

b 2

* This refers to the Honour, which his Grace the Duke of Montague and the Earl of Northampton have done us, the former in accepting the Office of Grand Visitor of the Hospital, and the latter that of perpetual President; as well as to the important Assurances, which the Earl of Halifax has given, and is giving, as in every other generous and zealous Service to the Design, so especially in presiding as Chairman in the present Committee for drawing up the Statutes of the Hospital, and taking other preparatory Measures for putting the Plan into the most speedy and effectual Execution: Circumstances, which in so happy a Concurrency, have given a Spirit and a Weight to its Resolutions, which it is hard to imagine how they could otherwise have had. I mention not the Names of several others of the Nobility, Gentry, and Clergy, who have distinguished themselves on this Occasion: The List, when published, will speak the Generosity of their Subscription; and other Services, not capable of being represented there or here, will, no doubt, live in the grateful Memory of all who have particularly known them, without any such Records.

dent and engaging Methods that could be contrived. The Effect will soon be seen ; and then, and not till then, the Managers will be able to judge what they can at first safely attempt, and will, I dare say, greatly rejoice to see a much grander Scheme practicable, than they have allowed themselves particularly to project.

It is with great Pleasure, that I see Persons, who have been listed under opposite Parties, and who bear different Denominations, cordially uniting to advance this generous Scheme, and consulting to make each other as easy as possible in the Execution of it. There is very little in the following Sermon, which is not Matter of common Concern, as we are Christians, and as we are Men ; and I am not aware of one Word, which can reasonably give Offence to any : And therefore I hope, the Name of the Author will be no prevailing Prejudice against its Acceptance and Usefulness. I cannot think an Attempt of this Kind out of Character in present Circumstances. I have peculiar Obligations to love a County, where I have spent so many agreeable Years, and in the various Parts of which I have the Pleasure of enjoying a personal Friendship with so many deserving People. But had I been only an occasional Resident in it for a few Months or Weeks, I could not have refused what little I might have had an Opportunity of doing, in Subserviency to a Design so friendly to Human Nature as this. Homo sum, humani nihil à me alienum puto.



Compassion to the SICK recommended and urged, &c.

PSALM XLI. 1, and 3.

Blessed is he that considereth the Poor; the LORD will deliver him in Time of Trouble: The LORD will strengthen him upon the Bed of Languishing: Thou wilt make all his Bed in his Sickness.



IT is Matter of certain Observation, and of delightful Reflection, that, under the Administration of a wise and gracious Providence, even the *Distresses* of *Human Nature* are so over-ruled, as to occasion some of its most exquisite
B Plea-

Pleasures. *Our own* have this Effect, when generously encountered in a good Cause; or when, from whatever Source they arise, we bear them with a calm Resignation to the Great Governour of all, animated by an humble Confidence in his Goodness. And the Calamities of *others*, deeply as they wound every compassionate Heart, are the accidental Cause of a proportionable Satisfaction attending every humane Attempt for their Relief. This is what I am perswaded, many of you, to whom I now speak, have often experienced already; and I hope, that Experience will now be largely and happily renewed. I am confident it will, if what I am about to lay before you in Favour of the Scheme, which is now opening upon us, for a COUNTY-INFIRMARY to be erected here, be regarded in such a Manner, as I have great Reason to hope it will; considering how *noble a Charity* it suggests, and how *ready* I have ever found you to comply with every Call of Providence *to contribute liberally* for the Assistance of the Neceffitous.

THAT important Branch of *Christian Charity*, which consists in *giving Alms* to the Poor and Indigent, has been the Subject of so many of my Discourses, that almost *every Topick*, and *every Argument*,
which

which I could think of to inforce it, has been warmly and frequently urged upon you; and the fairest *Examples* of such a Disposition have been particularly illustrated, that, charmed with the Beauty of them, you might *go and do likewise*. Especially have you been often pressed by that noblest and tenderest of all Arguments, which arises from the infinite *Compassion* and *Benevolence* of the Blessed JESUS, and the distinguished Genius of *his Religion*; as having *Charity* for its declared *End*, and rising above all other Religions, as much in the *Excellence of its Tendency*, as it doth in the *Dignity of its Author*. And therefore, without so much as recapitulating what I have said on such Occasions, I shall make it the whole of my present Work, to suggest such Things, as may have a peculiar Suitableness to that *particular Kind of Charity* which we have now in View: And I think myself exceedingly happy in this Opportunity of offering you a Set of Thoughts, which would never before have been equally seasonable here. Many of them will naturally arise from *the Words* which I at first read, as the Foundation of my Discourse: *Blessed is he that considereth the Poor; &c.*—

It would perhaps be too bold a *Criticism*, to pretend to determine the *par-*

ticular Distemper, under which *David* had been labouring, just before he composed this admirable *Psalms*. But I think it is in general abundantly evident, that it was occasioned by a violent and dangerous *Fit of Sickness*; in which he met with most inhumane Treatment from some *base and wicked Men*, who had pretended great Affection to him. “ *Mine Enemies*, says “ he, *speak Evil of me*, saying, *When shall he die, and his Name perish?* They “ think the Distemper, terrible as it is, “ does its Work too slowly, and would “ gladly, if they durst, aid its Victory by “ Murther. And as for him who is the “ Chief of them,” (by whom some suppose he meant *Absalom*, whose unnatural Rebellion might be ripened by the Concurrence of this Circumstance,) “ *if he come to see me*, as he frequently does “ under specious Pretences of Duty and “ Affection; yet in all his most respectful “ Condolences, *he speaks Vanity and Falsehood*, and *his Heart is in the mean* “ *time gathering Iniquity*; is making one “ malignant Remark or another, *which,* “ *when he goeth away out of my Apartment,* *he proclaims abroad*, to increase “ the Disaffection he is endeavouring to “ sow among my Subjects: And their “ mischievous Counsels are quickened and “ im-

“ imboldened hereby, while *they say*, an
 “ *Evil Disease cleaveth fast unto him*, as
 “ a peculiar Judgment of Heaven upon
 “ him; and now that he lieth disabled in
 “ his Bed, he shall arise no more. Yea,
 “ mine own familiar Friend, in whom I
 “ trusted to have given me the surest Affis-
 “ tance in my pressing Affairs, while I
 “ am thus rendered incapable of attend-
 “ ing to them myself, even he who did so
 “ long eat of my Bread, and had a Place
 “ at my Table, has, like an ungrateful
 “ Brute that strikes at his Feeder, lifted
 “ up his broad Heel against me,” as the
 Original imports *, “ and endeavoured to
 “ do me all the Mischief in his Power.”

THIS was *King David's* unhappy Cir-
 cumstance in *his Illness*, as Royal Dignity
 can neither secure the Continuance of
Health, or the Fidelity of *Friendship*; nor
 fortify the Heart against the Sting of *In-*
gratitude; especially in such a Concurrence
 of afflicting Circumstances. On his Reco-
 very he described it in the most lively
 Colours; and to represent how much it
 impressed him, he speaks of the Scene,
 as if it were actually present: And that a
 proper *Contraste* might set it off the more
 forcibly, he begins the *Psalms* with an
 affectionate Reflection on the *Beauty* of a

con-

contrary Character, and on the Happiness to which the Possessor of it was intitled. Blessed is he who considereth the Poor. The Original is yet more emphatical and extensive: Oh the Blessedness, or the various Felicities of that Man, who wisely reflects on the Case and Circumstances of him that is brought low.* The Margin renders it, *him that is Weak or Sick*: And another Translation gives it thus, *Blessed is the Man that provideth for the Sick and Needy*; which is a Sense undoubtedly comprehended in *the Words*, tho' I cannot think them limited to it. They speak of a Person *reduced and brought low*, whether by *Poverty, or Oppression, or Sicknefs, or any other Calamity, affecting Mind, Body, or Estate†*: From whence it will clearly follow,

* אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁכַּח אֶל דָּל

† They who can consult the *Original*, and will give themselves the Trouble of tracing the *Etymology* from דָּל, and examining the many Places in which *this Word* is used, will soon see the Justice of this Remark. It most frequently signifies *Poor*, and accordingly is often opposed to *Rich*; as, *Exod. xxx. 15. Ruth iii. 10. Job xxxiv. 19. Prov. x. 15. xix. 4. xxviii. 11.* It is sometimes rendered *brought low* in our Version; as, *Psal. lxxix. 8. cxlii. 6. and cxvi. 6.* in which last Place the Connection shews, it relates to *Sicknefs*. It is sometimes applied to Streams *emptied and dried up*; *Job xxviii. 4. Isai. xix. 6.* and sometimes it signifies *emaciated*, *Isai. xvii. 4.* and is in that Sense applied to *Pharaoh's lean Kine*, *Gen. xli. 19.* and to *Amnon* when *pinning away for Tamar*; *2 Sam. xiii. 4.* agreeably to which מְדַלָּה derived from the *same Root* is rendered *pinning Sicknefs*, *Isai. xxxviii. 12.* And it is elsewhere used to express
a Weak-

follow, that where *several of these Causes* join, as the Circumstance is peculiarly worthy of Compassion, *the Virtue*, and therefore *the Blessedness*, of him who is ready to pity and relieve it, must be proportionably great.

THE *Word* which we render *considereth*, is sometimes used for *taking an intelligent View of a Thing*, and sometimes for *acting in a prudent and reasonable Manner, suitable to such Views* *. And accordingly it well expresses the Character of one, who examines into the Circumstances of the afflicted Creature of whom *David* speaks, and upon that takes *wise and proper Measures* for giving him the most convenient and

a Weakness in the Eyes and Limbs : Compare *Isai.* xxxviii. 14. where לֹא עֵינַי לַמָּרוֹם should be rendered, *mine Eyes are so weakened*, (i. e. by languishing Illness,) *that I am not able to look up* : And *Prov.* xxvi. 7. which Verse might most naturally be translated, *As the Legs of the Lame sink under him*, (דָּלִי עֲקִי מַפְסָם) *so does a Parable in the Mouth of Fools* : *Solomon* thereby beautifully expressing how feeble the sublimest Discourses on Moral and Religious Subjects are in the Mouth of a vicious Man. I know many Criticks have produced these two last Texts, as Instances in which דָּלִי signifies *to be lifted up* ; but I believe, if most of the Places, in which the same Hebrew Word is said to signify contrary Things were accurately weighed, they would be found as little to the Purpose of proving that *very improbable*, and in many Instances *mischievous Assertion*, as these Two.

* שָׁכַל has plainly the former Signification, *Neh.* viii. 13. *Job* xxxiv. 27, 35. *Psal.* xiv. 2. *Jer.* ix. 24. *Dan.* i. 4. and the latter, *1 Sam.* xviii. 14, 15, 30. *Psal.* cvi. 7. *Amos* v. 13.

and effectual *Assistance* he can. And as on the one hand, it may be intended to recommend the Use of *Discretion* in directing and managing our *Charities*; so on the other, it may intimate, that where Men *overlook* those that are *brought low*, it is an Evidence of a *narrow inattentive Mind*, that takes up with short and superficial Views of Things; whereas if Men's *Sentiments* were *juster*, their *Affections* and *Actions* would be *kinder* and *more beneficent*. They would find, that *Nature*, and *Duty*, and *Interest* too, if rightly considered, and justly estimated, would all dictate the same Thing on such Occasions.

THIS will especially appear, when it is considered, in how gracious and condescending a Manner the Blessed God, the Supreme Disposer of all Events, is pleased to *interest himself* in the Cause of the *Indigent* and *Distressed*, and the kind Notice which he takes of *the Man* that appears as a *Patron* of such Persons. *The LORD will deliver him in Time of Trouble*, or (as it might more literally be rendered,) *in the Day of Calamity**: As if it had been said, “ There
 “ is a *Revolution* in *Human Affairs*, as
 “ well as in the *returning Seasons* of
 “ Day and Night, of Summer and Winter.
 “ *Cala-*

“ Calamity will have its Day, and the
 “ Time will come, when they, who are
 “ now *most prosperous*, will find themselves
 “ surrounded with *dark and gloomy Scenes*.
 “ And then may the *generous and chari-*
 “ *table Man* hope to receive the *Compass-*
 “ *sion* he hath extended ; or (as we else-
 “ where read,) *with the Merciful thou,*
 “ LORD, wilt shew thyself *Merciful* ^a.”

And indeed one cannot without Astonish-
 ment, as well as Delight, reflect on what
 is so suitably and so tenderly added in
 the *third Verse*, to express the *Divine Care*
 of such a Person. *The LORD*, (JEHOVAH
 himself, in whom is *everlasting Strength* ^b,
 and who *bears up the Pillars of Heaven*),
will strengthen him upon the Bed of Lan-
guishing, or as it might be rendered, *will*
support him, or *hold him up there* * : *Thou*
wilt make all his Bed in his Sickness † :
 Some would literally render it, *thou wilt*
change his Bed, and explain it of turn-
 ing a *Bed of Pain and Distress* into a
Couch of Pleasure and Delight ; supposing
 it alludes to their Custom of *lying on*
Couches in their Banquets. But I think
 the Image which *our Translation* suggests
 equally suits the *Original*, and is, on Ac-
 count of its *Tenderness*, greatly to be

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pre-

^a Psal. xviii. 25.

^b Isai. xxvi. 4.

* יסעדנו

† כל משכבו הפכת בחליו

preferred. The Good Man is now supposed in his Turn to be *brought low by Illness*, so exceeding low, that he is not able so much as to *sit up in his Bed*; and GOD does not disdain to represent himself under the Image of an *affectionate Friend*, or *Parent*, who *holds him up* in his Arms; and himself *assists in turning his Bed*, and *making it easy* to him, when, being *too weak to rise*, he is only able to *shift the Sides*.

AMAZED and charmed with an Expression of so much Condescension and Indearment, I set myself, with additional Pleasure, as in the Presence of this Compassionate GOD, to *open my Mouth*, and *plead the Cause of the Poor and the Afflicted*; and would attempt to cultivate in your Minds, and in my own, *the Temper* which *the Words* recommend. That I may do it in the most suitable and useful Manner, I shall,

I. REPRESENT the *Reasonableness* of a *Compassionate Temper*, towards those in general, who are *languishing on Beds of Sickness*.

II. SHEW how *wise* and *happy* a *Method* of expressing our *Compassion* towards such, *that* which is now recommended to us is *like to prove*: And,

III. CON-

recommended and urged. II

III. CONCLUDE with the Mention of *some Circumstances* in the present Situation of Affairs, by which the *Design* is *peculiarly recommended* to us at this Time.

I. LET me represent in general how *reasonable* it is, that we should *feel Compassion* in our Hearts towards those, who *languish* under the Burthen of *Bodily Disorders*, and particularly are *confined* to *Beds* or *Chambers of Sickness*.

AND this you will not only *see*, but *feel* too, if you reflect—on the *Calamity* of *their State*;—on the *Tender Sense* they naturally have of the *Treatment* they meet with in it;—and how *liable* we *ourselves* are to the *same Circumstances of Distress*.

I. CONSIDER the *Calamity* of *their State*.

SOME of you know it by familiar Acquaintance, by dear-bought *personal Experience*, and must have the *Wormwood* and the *Gall* in a long and a painful *Remembrance*^c. Go back in your Thoughts to *those Chambers*, which you were almost ready to consider as *your Sepulchres*, and *those Beds*, from whence perhaps you expected

C 2

pected to *rise up no more*, or which seemed as *Racks*, if not as *Graves*, to you; and then say, whether you were not *Objects of Compassion* yourselves, and whether others, in the like Circumstances, must not necessarily be so. Others of you have, no doubt, been *conversant* with the *Sick* and the *Pained*: Reflect on what you then *saw* and *heard*; and let your *Eye*, and your *Ear* *affect* your *Heart*.

THERE are indeed some, who seem solicitous to keep as much as possible *from the Sight* of such *mournful Objects*; as if they were afraid, that in such a Circumstance an *involuntary Kind of Humanity* should invade their Hearts, and force them on a sudden, and as it were before they are well aware of it, to do something *more generous* than they care to allow themselves in. But no Man, who hath lived any Time in the World, can be such a *Stranger to Human Nature*, and to *Human Life*, as not to know something of the *various Distempers* and *Accidents* to which we are liable in this feeble State, and of the sad *Symptoms of Sorrow* that attend them: Fatal *Effects* of the *Entrance of Sin* into this World of ours, and awful *Monuments* of the *Divine Displeasure* against the first Instance of it!

I AM

I AM not indeed learned enough to run over the *Tenth Part* of those *Names*, which *Physicians* have given to the *various Maladies* under which their Aid is demanded. But the *Fever*, the *Dropsy*, the *Gout*, the *Stone*, the *Rheumatism*, the *Cholick*, the *Asthma*, the *Cancer*, the *Palsy*, *Consumptions*, and the like, are Words of *dreadful Import*; to the general Signification of which few are Strangers, tho' perhaps none, who have not *themselves* laboured under them, can distinctly understand how much Terror they express.

LET us however think a little closely, (for the Thought may have an apparent Tendency to *humble* and to *humanize* our Hearts,) into how *sad an Object* the Greatest, the Richest, the Strongest, and the Fairest of Mankind is *reduced* in a few Weeks or Days, when *attacked* by any of these, and *crushed*, as it were, into an early, and an untimely Old Age. *When thou, LORD, with thy Rebukes dost correct Man for his Iniquity, how dost thou cause his Beauty and his Vigour to consume away like a Moth*, which moulders under the lightest Touch^d? How are all the Services of Life *obstructed*, and all its choicest Pleasures *blasted* at once, as the opening Blossoms of Spring by the Severity of Winds and Frosts! According
to

to that most natural Description of *Job*, when a Man is *chastened with Pain upon his Bed*, and the *Multitude of his Bones with strong Pain*, how does his *Life abhor Bread*, and his *Soul dainty Meat*; so that his *Flesh is consumed away*, that it cannot be seen, and his *Bones, which were not seen, stick out*^e! In some Distempers, what *convulsive Strugglings*, what *terrible Heavings and Pantings for Breath*! In others, what *deep Sighs* do we observe, what *piercing Groans*, what *doleful Cries*! Or in Persons of a more resolute Temper, amidst a painful Silence, what *earnest speaking Looks*, while perhaps *large Drops of Sweat* are trickling down the Face, and *Nature* seems, as it were, to be *weeping its Distress* at every Pore! And in Cases less acute than these, what *Months of Vanity* are many active Souls made to possess, and what *wearisome Nights* are appointed to them^f! How slowly do the Hours and the Moments roll away, while in the Evening they say, *Would to GOD it were Morning*; and in the Morning, *Would to GOD it were Evening*^g! but find themselves equally disappointed in their Expectations of Relief, from the Silence of the Night, or the Amusements of the Day: Till at length

^e *Job xxxiii. 19, 20, 21. xxviii. 67.*

^f *Job vii. 3.*

^g *Deut.*

length perhaps *Nature is weakened* to such a Degree, that it can scarce bear the Voice of the dearest Friend, if a little louder than a Whisper, or endure so much Light as shall discover his Countenance! God only knows, how many are at this Moment in a Condition *sadder* than I have described, while *we* are ourselves *at Ease in Zion*^h, and are too little *grieved for the Afflictions* of our Brethrenⁱ. Yet surely, if we have any Thing of the *Man*, and the *Christian*, we cannot be *wholly unmoved*, but must *feel some tender Solitude* rising in our Hearts, and must be *casting about in our Thoughts* for some *proper Manner* of expressing it; especially when we consider,

2. THE peculiar *Tenderness of the Spirits* in such Circumstances as these, and that *exquisite Sensibility*, either of *Regard*, or *Neglect*, which is almost inseparable from them.

SUCH is the *Vanity of Human Friends*, that they can do much *to wound*, where they can do very little *to heal*; their *Negligence* can *greatly afflict*, where their most solicitous *Care* can administer *very little Comfort*. And this is more especially the Case in *Sickness*. When the *Blood* is impoverished,

^h Amos vi. 1.

ⁱ Ver. 6.

poverished, when the *Animal Spirits* are weakened, and when *melancholy Humours* prevail in the Body, *little Things* impress with a very disproportionate Weight. *Solomon* hath observed long ago, that when *Heaviness in the Heart of a Man* maketh it stoop, then a good Word maketh it peculiarly glad^k. And by a Parity of Reason then, any Thing that looks like *Unkindness* in a Friend pierces much deeper, than at another Time; when Nature is in all its Vigour, and the Business and Amusements of Life divert the Mind from pausing on such Things, and the Imagination from dressing them up in Colours of its own, which, unnatural as they often are, appear to the *distempered Mind* inherent in the Objects themselves. *Sick People* likewise, conscious to themselves that they cannot but be *less agreeable* than at other Times, easily conclude, that they grow *insupportably burthensome* to those about them: And if great Care be not taken to prevent it, they will be very ready to infer, that *their Friends* are wearied out with them; and perhaps will secretly suspect, they wish them out of the Way, that they may be eased of their Burthen: While they imagine, like *Job*, that were *their Friends* in such an *afflicted State* as themselves,

^k Prov. xii. 25.

selves, *they* should study all Opportunities of *softening their Sorrows*, by every Circumstance of the most *tender Address*¹: And then they *bemoan themselves*, and think, Surely it is *enough*, to bear all this Illness and Pain, without having the *Unkindness* of such and such a *Friend* added to it: And so perhaps, the *saddest Complaints* of *Job*^m, *David*ⁿ, and *Heman*^o, are thought over as *applicable* to their sorrowful Condition.

THIS is indeed very often *their Infirmary*; but we should bear it, and pity it, and study, as well as we can, to accommodate ourselves to it: For it undoubtedly makes their Case *much more afflicted*, and therefore *more compassionate*. And it will especially appear so, if we reflect,

3. How *liable* we *ourselves* are, to share in *these Sorrows* and *these Infirmities*.

THIS Thought is beautifully touched upon by the *Apostle*, when he says, *Remember those that suffer Affliction, as being yourselves also in the Body*^p: As if he should have said, “ In necessary Consequence of
“ *being in the Body*, you are yourselves
“ *obnoxious to the like Affliction*; and there-
D “ fore

¹ Job vi. 14. xvi. 5. ^m Job vi. 15. xiii. 4, 13. xvi. 2, 20. xix. 2, 3, 14,—22. ⁿ Psal. xxxviii. 11. lv. 12, 13. lxix. 8, 20. cxlii. 4. ^o Psal. lxxxviii. 8, 18. ^p Heb. xiii. 3.

“ fore should *readily impart* to your afflicted Brethren *such Assistances*, as you in a Change of Circumstances would reasonably desire.”

AND is it not most evidently *the Case here?* What are we, Sirs, *better than our Fathers* [†]? *better than our Brethren?* better than *those*, who have *drooped*, and *sunk*, and *died*, under *such Burthens* as those I have described? *Is our Strength the Strength of Stones*, or *is our Flesh Brass* [‡], that we should plead *an Exemption* from Sorrows and Complaints *common to our Species?* In all Probability, they *await us*; and would await us, if we were *Nobles* and *Princes of the Earth*: And God only knows, how soon we are to *begin our Encounter* with them, or how soon they may *complete their Victory* over us, and bring us *beyond the Reach* of being *helpful to Men*, or *receiving Help from them*.

AND, which is peculiarly interesting, *these* are probably some of *our last Scenes*. When we have done with our *Merchandise*, our *Husbandry*, or our *Studies*; when we have finished our *Journies*, our *Visits*, our *Sports*, and our *Feasts*, we *must*, unless Death surprize us with a very sudden Blow, *retire into our Chambers of Illness* to come out no more, but *languish away* the

[†] 1 Kings xix. 4.

[‡] Job vi. 12.

the Remainder of our Days there, till the Moment of our *Exit from Life* shall come. *There shall we need the Compassion*, we are now exhorted to extend ; shall need *all the Relief*, which a generous Heart may then feel, in a Consciousness of having been, in its better Days, *an Helper to the Afflicted* ; and above all, shall need *that Divine Consolation*, which GOD is ready to impart to *that blessed Man*, who has considered him that is brought low, so graciously expressed in the Text, by holding him up on his Bed of Languishing, and by making all his Bed in his Sickness.

AND therefore, in the Conclusion of *this Head*, let me intreat you to suffer the Word of Exhortation ^f, and to bear away in your Hearts a firm Resolution of doing all you can, to be *helpful to the Sick*, whatever their other Circumstances in Life be, as Providence may give you an Opportunity and Call. Consider those that are brought low : Reflect seriously and tenderly on their Condition ; for they sometimes suffer a great deal from the *meer Inattention* of those about them, who yet could not bear on any Terms *deliberately to do what they apprehended cruel or unkind*. Let us, as *afflicted Job* expresses it, (as afflicted Persons know best how to speak

of Afflictions,) *put our Souls into their Souls Stead*^t. Let us *inwardly commiserate* their melancholy Case; and let our Behaviour *express that Commiseration* in the most natural and genuine Manner. Let us be *ready*, where it may be useful to them, *to visit them*; for *visiting the Sick* is, you know, mentioned among those *Acts of Charity*, which *Christ* assures us he will commemorate with *peculiar Honour*, even *upon the Throne of his Glory*^u. Let us *patiently bear* those Instances of *Fretfulness* and *Peevishness*, into which under such a Pressure they may be ready to fall; imputing them to *their Distemper*, and not to *themselves*. Let us *avoid* every Thing *rough and boisterous* in our Behaviour, near the Apartments in which they are; and let *nothing be done*, which might give the *poor Patient* Reason to *sigh on his Bed*, and say, “Alas, they do not regard me! “they little think *what it is to be ill!*” Shew in all your Conduct a *Concern* for *their Comfort and Happiness*: Shew it, above all, by endeavouring by *wise and pious Discourses* to lead them into the *best Improvement of their Afflictions*, and to form their Minds to such Sentiments and Characters, that thro’ Divine Grace they may be intitled to the *noblest Supports*; those

^t Job xvi. 4.^u Mat. xxv. 36.

those which arise from a Sense of the Divine Favour, from pardoned Guilt, and from a comfortable Prospect in the Invisible and Eternal World ; that so they may not *struggle at once* with the *Agonies* of a *distempered Body*, and a *wounded Spirit* ; but rather, *as the Outward Man declines*, may find *the Inward daily renewed*^w. And to shew how sincerely you are concerned for *their Spiritual*, neglect not *their Temporal Interest*. If they are *Poor*, extend *your Alms* to them, and endeavour to procure for them *such Medicines, Food, Attendance, and other Accommodations*, as may *promote their Recovery*, or at least *alleviate their Sufferings*. It is what, I question not, many of you are *often doing*, and you now have an Opportunity of *doing it* with some *peculiar Advantages* ; as you will evidently perceive by what I have to offer under my *Second General*, the Business of which is,

II. To shew how *wise and happy a Way* of expressing *our Compassion* to the *Sick and Infirm*, that which is now *proposed* to us is *like to prove*.

You apprehend, that I mean *our concurring in this Scheme* for establishing a
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COUNTY-HOSPITAL in this Town, for the *Relief of the Poor*, who are *sick* or *wounded*; into which, in extream Cases, they may be *freely received*, and in which they may be *properly assisted*, without Expence to themselves, or the Families to which they belong.

THE very *Mention* of this *Design* might seem sufficient to *recommend* it to every intelligent and generous Person; and I am sure *none*, who have perused the *printed Paper* in Favour of it, which has been generously *published* and spread over the *whole County*, can be *uninformed* on this Subject: Nevertheless, as it may be *new* to *some*, and *others* may have reflected *but slightly upon it*, I shall say something briefly on the Head, and I hope a few Words may suffice; since the *Scheme* wears so *beautiful an Aspect*, if only viewed in its *first Appearances*; as well as *appears so fruitful of Good*, when attentively examined in its *remoter Consequences*.

1. You will easily see, that the *Scheme* wears a *very beautiful Aspect*, if viewed only in its *first Appearances*.

IT promises, in its most obvious and *direct Design*, Relief to the *Poor* in their *Sickness*; and their Case is attended with
many

many Circumstances to recommend it to our Compassion, which have not yet been touched upon in the preceding Branch of my Discourse. What I have *said before* might be sufficient to prove, and *one Day's Experience of our own* might in a yet more convincing Manner demonstrate, that *Sickness* is of itself a *Burthen heavy enough*, tho' we languish upon Beds of Down, and have *all the Relief* we can derive from the Skill of *Physicians*, the Attendance of *Servants* and *Friends*, with every other additional Accommodation which the most plentiful Fortune can furnish out. What then must it be *to bear all this*, and perhaps more than this, *in the Want of all Things!* What must it be for a Person, who perhaps found it *hard enough to live* when he was in all the Vigour of Nature, and *his own Hands ministred to his Necessities**, to find himself under his Languor, perhaps under his Agony, *destitute of Medicines*, destitute of *Attendance*, and it may be, destitute of *convenient Food*, with hardly any Thing but *Inclination*, in these Cases *no certain Guide*, to direct him what is so. Or if pressed with a Sense of urgent Necessity, after long Delay, he calls in *such Assistance*, and procures it, perhaps it is at *such an Expence*, that his *Spirits are broken* with

* Acts xx. 34.

with the Thoughts of the *Debt* he is contracting, which either prevents, or retards, or imbitters *his Recovery*; and when it is perfected, almost tempts him to *wish* he had quitted the World, rather than survived under such an insupportable Pressure.

BUT so far as *the Scheme* now opening upon us *succeeds*, this additional *Load of Misery* will be *taken off*. The *Patient* will be encouraged to seek for *timely Assistance*, before his Illness becomes inveterate, the Neglect of which is, no doubt, Yearly the Destruction of Thousands: And when his Case is *so bad*, as to require his being *taken into the Infirmary*, he will be kept clean and warm, with convenient Accommodations of *Food, Physick, and Lodging*: He will be kept under *proper Regimen and Government*, which may shelter him, on the one hand, from becoming a *Prey to ignorant Pretenders*, whose chief Merit seems to be, to *sell Diseases and Death* at Reasonable Rates; and on the other, he will be protected from *Imprudence*, which is oftentimes *more fatal* than the Disease; while according to the *Rules of the House*, it is put out of his own Power to *indulge himself*, or to be *indulged by over fond Friends*, if such he have, in what would be *pernicious to his Health*.

IN Consequence of this we see, that *many* are recovered in such Houses as these, who have long languished in their own, under tedious and extreamly dangerous *Distempers*; some of them, perhaps, after having, like the poor Woman in the Gospel, consumed all their Living on Physicians, and been nothing the better, but rather the worse^y.

FACTS impress the Mind more strongly, than any Reasonings unsupported by them. I therefore think it proper here to tell you, that I have made the most careful Observations I could, on those Yearly Accounts of other Hospitals which have come to my Hands, viz. those of Winchester, Bath, Exeter, York, Bristol, and the London and Westminster Infirmaries. Few of these have reached back farther than Three Years, and some have extended only to One; and I find on the whole, that we have an Account of Seven Thousand Three Hundred and Thirty, who are known, or supposed to be cured, and only of Seven Hundred and Eighty four, who have died, or been discharged as Incurable: So that it should seem by this hasty and imperfect Calculation, (for such I confess it to be,) that near Ten Patients have been relieved for One who has failed of Success.

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I FIND *Palsies, Dropsies, Consumptions, Fevers, Leprosies, Rheumatisms, Cholicks, Stone*, as well as Multitudes of *Ulcers, Fractures, Dislocations*, and the like, on the *List* of those *Calamities* from which these *poor Creatures* have been *relieved*: And it farther appears, that *great Numbers* of these had been *languishing* under their *Distempers* *Two Years*, others *Five, Ten, Twelve, Fourteen*, and a few *Twenty Years*; and this after *some of them* had been reduced to so low an *Ebb*, that *their Admission* was blamed as an *hopeless Attempt*, yet a *few Months* have *turned their Captivity*, and they have gone out from those *Gates* *vigorous and chearful*, into which they were brought almost like *Corpses* borne on *Men's Shoulders**.

WHAT Heart does not *feel a secret Pleasure* at hearing such an *Article*! Who would not *rejoice*, if even *large Contributions* could be the *Means* of procuring *so happy Effects*! But it ought farther to be considered *in Favour of this Design*, that there is, in *Proportion* to the *Good* to be expected from it, *great Frugality* in *Liberality* so dispensed. For it is certain, (as many have observed on such *Occasions*,)

* I am credibly informed, that at *Exeter* there have been an *Instance* or two of *Persons*, who on *Account* of their *extream Weakness* were brought into the *Hospital* laid in their *Coffins*, who have gone out carrying their *Coffins* on their *Backs*.

casions,) that *a small Sum* thus managed will go farther, than a *much larger* given to relieve the *Sick Poor* at their own Houses; as the *same Person* may attend on different *Patients* at the same Time; and as the *Medicines* and *Provisions* to be used in the House may be *bought at the best Hand*; whereas it is often, and I fear, too justly said, that *the Poor* generally pay *dearer than others* for what they have*.—What is thus given is also *much securer* from being *misapplied*, either by the *Persons themselves*, or by *others*, who might be base enough to make a *Prey* of them.—Nor can I forbear mentioning it, as another *most agreeable Circumstance* attending the *Charity proposed*, that it often *shelters the Per-*

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son,

* It has been spoken of (in the *Supplement* to the *Account of Exeter Hospital*, pag. 3.) as a Thing universally confessed, that *more Remedies* may be administered for *Ten Pounds* in this Way, than for *Fifty* in another. And the truly Reverend and excellent *Dr. Alured Clarke*, (whose Memory will ever be dear to all good Men who knew his Character,) says in the *Preface* to his *Sermon* at the Opening of *Winchester Hospital*, pag. 5. “ If *Half the*
“ *Money* that is given should really be *perverted*, (which
“ I hope there is *not the least Reason to suspect*,) there
“ would still be *more Good done by it* than by any other
“ possible Way of distributing to the *Necessities of the*
“ *Poor*: So that every wise Man would think it worth
“ his while to exert his Endeavours in this Way, out
“ of mere good Husbandry to himself and the Publick.”
He afterwards adds, pag. 9, 10. “ It is well known, that
“ *several Thousands* are relieved in these *Hospitals* at a
“ *less Expence*, than can be afforded for *so many Hundreds*
“ in any other Way.”

28 *Compassion to the Sick*

son, who receives the Benefit of it, from the Mortification of *Coming to a Parish-Allowance*; and perhaps of being consigned over to a *Work-House*: Which is generally a terrible Sort of *Infirmary* indeed, where we have Reason to fear, there is seldom sufficient Care taken to secure the Cleanliness, the Quiet, or the Morals of those, who are so unhappy as to be brought thither; tho' perhaps some of them have lived creditably and comfortably in Families of their own, have long contributed for the Support of the Poor around them, and have been at last reduced by the afflictive Hand of Providence, without any visible Crime of theirs, or any remarkable Imprudence. A State, which, when *Sickness* is added to it, appears one of the most desolate and deplorable which can be imagined: So that it is no Wonder, the very Prospect and Apprehension of it should press, in a very painful Manner, on an honest and tender Spirit, and greatly increase the Force of any bodily Disorder, which seems to threaten so sad an Event.

REFLECT, *Christians*, on such Considerations, as these; and add to all, that you are the *Disciples* of that benevolent JESUS, who went about doing Good^z, and who particularly expressed the Tenderness of

^z Acts x. 38.

of his generous Compassion, by *healing all Manner of Sicknes, and all Manner of Disease among the People*^a. This was the *Calamity of Human Nature*, which seems of all its *Temporal Evils* to have *impressed him most*; and I am sure, if we have any *Thing of his Spirit and Temper*, without which we are *none of his*, we must necessarily *wish well to a Design of this Kind*, if it were only considered in Reference to those, who *receive in their own Persons immediate Relief* from it. But I am to add, that as *the Scheme appears thus amiable in its most obvious Aspect*, so likewise,

2. It will *appear more abundantly fruitful of future Good*, when attentively weighed in its *remoter Consequences*.

THE *Benefit* extends *much farther* than the *Persons thus relieved*. It evidently affects *others of their Families*, who have *that Time and Labour* to employ in the *Business of their respective Callings*, which must otherwise have been taken up in *attending the Sick*. It extends also to *all those*, to whom the *Patients themselves* may be *useful when recovered from their Illness*; whether their *near Relations and Friends*, who have any *Dependance upon them*;

^a Mat. iv. 23.

them; or *the Publick*, who owe much more, than we are generally aware, to the *Labours of the Poor*, and upon that Account are under great *Obligations to them*, which I fear are seldom considered. Not to say, that in many Cases the very *Existence* of those yet to be born may, under God, depend on such Cures.

I SHALL not now insist on the *Advantage* which others may receive in *their Illness*, by the *improved Skill* of *Physicians* and *Surgeons*, in Consequence of their Attendance on such *Hospitals*; tho' it is evidently a very possible Thing, that the Lives of some very useful and valuable Persons may be so preserved. It is yet more obvious and certain, that many *other Poor* may be *relieved*, in the respective *Parishes* to which they belong, by *that Money* from the *Parish Stock*, which must otherwise have been employed upon *the Sick*: Or if, in Consequence of being discharged from this Burthen, the *Parish Rates* be lessened, (as perhaps in many Places they sensibly may be,) the *Subscribers* of *that Parish* are then paid in *Specie*; and after the *Honour* and *Pleasure* of bestowing their Bounty, a *Part of it* immediately flows back upon them again. And how much may so flow back, and with what large *Accessions of Blessing*, God only knows; as He only can tell, what

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Casualties and Diseases are warded off, what Prosperity and Success in Affairs may be allotted, as the Token of his favourable Regard to this pious Munificence.

NEITHER can it be improper for me to add upon this Head, that what was more directly intended as *a Benefit to the Body*, may prove *a Blessing to the Soul*. For *dissolute Persons*, by this Means being brought for a while *under regular Discipline*, may perhaps be *broken and reclaimed*: The good *Instructions* they receive from *Ministers* who attend them, especially while *the Rod of God* is upon them, and *his Sword* may seem to hang over them; the *Spectacles of Mortality* frequently before their Eyes; together with the *Regularity and good Order* to which in *such Places* they will be *accustomed*, and their being *sheltered* from *many Temptations*, from which, in *some Kinds of Sickness*, the *Patient* is not necessarily *secure*; may all, under the Influence of *Divine Grace*, prove the Means of *sowing the Seeds of true Religion* in their Hearts, and of *infusing* into their Minds *that noblest of all Cordials*, an *Antidote* against the *servile Fears* of the *Second Death*.

NOR does it appear to me a contemptible Effect of *this Charity*, that as it is necessarily concerted upon *a Plan*, in which *all Parties and Denominations* are equally

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concerned, it will probably be a Means of promoting more candid and catholick Sentiments, in Consequence of repeated Opportunities of mutual Converse. This wears out that Narrowness and Bigotry of Spirit, which, where it prevails, renders the Christian so unlike himself; and which is generally the Effect of Ignorance, and arises from viewing our Brethren thro' false Mediums, which represent, what may in itself be regular and fair, in a distorted and disagreeable Form. As Interviews with each other have a general Tendency to rectify such mistaken Apprehensions, that Tendency is peculiarly evident, where this Circumstance is added, that all are associated in the same good Design, and have agreed on laying aside every Party View in pursuing it. This may promote something of that Unity of Heart, under a Variety of Professions, which good Men on all Sides wish; and which, amidst such an unavoidable Diversity of Sentiments, is the only Method of securing the Honour of Christianity, and the Peace of the Church.

I MUST by all means add, that whatever good Consequences this Scheme may produce, which are many more than I have enumerated above, our engaging heartily in it may render them both extensive and lasting. It is probable, that neighbouring Counties may quickly learn to imitate
our

our Example, when they see in Fact that it is *no impracticable Design* : An Apprehension, which I suppose has hitherto been the *chief Obstruction*, where its obvious Benefits have been at all thought of. At length it may *spread* from *County to County*, till perhaps there will not a *Parish* be found in *Britain*, which shall not have an *Interest* in some such *charitable Foundation*; to which they may send *their Sick* in the most obstinate *Chronical Cases*, with some Prospect of Relief. Thus the *remotest Regions* of our Land may have Reason on this Account to *call us Blessed*; and I will add, the *remotest Generations* may also have Reason to do it. Reflect *how many Hundreds* are at this Day enjoying the *Benefits* of those *wise and charitable Foundations*, which our Nation owes to the pious and beneficent KING EDWARD THE SIXTH, of truly sacred and immortal Memory. So would I hope, that in *this Place*, when our *Children*, and our *Grand-children* are in their Graves, their *remotest Descendants*, which arise in their Stead, (and God only knows, what *Revolutions* may bring any of them to need it,) may have Cause to reflect on *this Year 1743*, as the *happy Æra* of an *Establishment*, to which many around them may owe *their Health*, their *Comfort*, their *Usefulness*,

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fulness, and possibly, under GOD, their *Christian Principles*, and their *immortal Hopes*. Whatever *Streams* may in the mean time have *flowed into it*, (and GOD grant, they may be as large as shall be needed,) *the Fountain* will be traced up *hither*; and *Blessings* will be pronounced on the *Memory of those*, who have opened to these refreshing and *healing Waters* so free and so pleasant a *Course*.

THESE Considerations I lay before you, not to *extort* any Thing from you, as against your Wills, by mere Importunity; but to *convince you*, of what I hope will be abundantly *sufficient* to engage your *Concurrence* in the *Design*; I mean, that it is eminently *calculated* for *Extensive Usefulness*. I wish you may heartily *join in it*, because I wish your *present Happiness*, and your *future Comfort*. It is observable, that when our blessed *Redeemer* sent forth *his Apostles*, as *Sheep among Wolves*, he gave them *this Consolation* in the midst of their Poverty and Affliction, that tho' as for *Silver and Gold* they had none, they should be able to command *one of the noblest Delights* which Riches could purchase, in being the Means of *healing the Sick*^b. This was, if I may be allowed the Familiarity of the Expression, *one of the great Perquisites* which

^b Mat. x. 8.

which he permitted to these his most *favourite Servants*; that their Hearts, rendered no doubt by his Grace exquisitely sensible, should have the *Godlike Pleasure* of beholding from Time to Time the *cheerful Countenances* of those, who had lately been among the *most lamentable Spectacles* of Human Nature, and now under God *owed their Health, their Limbs, and their Lives* to them; and of seeing the *Joy* of *Families and Neighbourhoods*, made happy by the *Recovery* of those who were dear to them. I wish you, *my Brethren, beloved in the Lord*, a Pleasure something like *this of the Apostles*; and may I not add, *of their Master* too, so far as a Diversity of Circumstances will admit. And it is not only in *Compassion to the Afflicted*, but in the *Overflowings of the sincerest Friendship to you*, that I go on, (unnecessary as it may almost seem,) in the Conclusion of my Discourse,

III. To touch on *some Circumstances* peculiar to the *present Season*, which may *especially recommend this Scheme* to our *immediate Regard*.

AND here it is obvious to think of *the War* in which we are now engaged,—of the *Mercies of the Harvest* which we

have lately reaped,—and of the *Crisis* to which *the Scheme* is now brought, which therefore must be *immediately supported*, or *sunk* beyond all probable Hope of future Recovery.

- I. THE Consideration of *the War*, in which we are embarked, may properly be introduced as what should have *some Weight with us* on this Occasion.

THIS should engage us *as a Nation*, to conduct ourselves in as *virtuous and pious a Manner* as possible; as the *most probable Way* of drawing down *the Divine Blessing* upon our *Arms*: Now it is very reasonable to suppose, that *Acts of publick Charity*, being in their own Nature so *peculiarly pleasing* to the gracious Father and Governour of the Universe, must have a *great Tendency* to this. An ancient *Jewish Writer* expresses this in Terms remarkably adapted to the present Purpose: “*Help the Poor*,” says he, “*for the Commandment’s Sake*; and shut up Alms, as it were, in thy Store-house;” almost as if he had said, *Raise Hospitals for Magazines*: “*And it shall fight for thee against thine Enemies, better than a mighty Shield,*” or a *strong Spear*;” that is, than any
Kind

Kind of *defensive or offensive Armour*. Nay an *inspired Prophet*, when giving Advice to him, who was then the greatest Monarch upon Earth, *Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon*, expresses himself thus : *Oh King, let my Counsel be acceptable unto thee : Break off thy Sins by Righteousness, and thine Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor ; if it may be a Lengthening out of thy Tranquillity* ^c.

AND as a View to our *future Interest*, especially in this nice Conjunction of Affairs, may require such a Care ; so it will be a very proper Expression of our Gratitude, for the Assistance which God has lately given us. The *Victory at Dettingen* was a very remarkable and seasonable Appearance of Providence in our Favour, which we have been solemnly acknowledging again and again in our Publick Devotions. Let us also acknowledge it in our Actions. Let us present some grateful Tribute toward this good Work, as a Thank-Offering to Him, who giveth Salvation to Kings ^d, for having so graciously guarded the Life, the Liberty, and Safety of our Sovereign, KING GEORGE. Had the Breath of our Nostrils, the Anointed of the LORD, been taken in the Snares of the Enemy ^e, and our Glory in any Sense been delivered into their

^c Dan. iv. 27.

^d Psal. cxliv. 10.

^e Lam. iv. 20.

their Hand^f, Expences of a very different Nature might have been occasioned, and have fallen upon our broken Spirits with a very afflictive Weight. But I will not dwell on so melancholy a Thought. We are presenting our daily Prayers for HIS MAJESTY'S Security and Prosperity, while, with a Generosity which I hope our Nation will never forget, he is hazarding his Life for us in the high Places of the Field^g: Let our Alms rise with our Prayers, if we desire they should come up as a grateful Memorial before GOD^h.

2. *THE Mercies of the Harvest may likewise properly be mentioned, as rendering the Charity I have been proposing peculiarly seasonable.*

God has remarkably appeared for us, to crown the Year with his Goodnessⁱ, and to load the Earth with his Bounty; and he has added this, to compleat the Favour, that he has reserved to us, in as agreeable a Manner as we could ourselves have wished, *the appointed Weeks of the Harvest^k. More seasonable Weather on such an Occasion has not, so far as I can learn, been known in the Memory of Man: Seasonable*

^f Psal. lxxviii. 61.

^g Judg. v. 18.

^h Acts x. 4.

ⁱ Psal. lxy. 11.

^k Jer. v. 24.

able in this respect, that as *the Bottles of Heaven* have been so *restrained*¹, that there have been *no violent Rains* in the Time of *Harvest*, to *sweep away* or *corrupt* the Fruits of the Earth; so for several of the most busy and important Days, *God has spread his Cloud* over the Heavens, so as to *shelter the Reaper* in the midst of his Toil from those *excessive Heats*, which often render *Autumn* much more *sickly* than it would otherwise be. Since then *God hath made such Provision for satisfying our Poor with Bread*^m, and for *preserving our Health* too, he may seem thereby to *call upon you*, by the gentlest Voice, to *give him*, in this pious Work, *a Part of that Substance* with which he hath replenished you. And surely you must feel yourselves *drawn*, as by *the Cords of a Man*, to lay out this Way some of the *Stores* which he has with so liberal a Hand poured in upon you, and which in *sparing your Health* he has both spared and sweetened. *Honour the LORD* therefore *with your Substance*, and *with the first Fruits of all your Increase*ⁿ, as a thankful Acknowledgment of what he hath already done; and then you may by his Promise be encouraged to hope, that in future Instances, *your Barns shall be filled with Plenty, and your Presses*

¹ Job xxxviii. 37. ^m Psal. cxxxii. 15. ⁿ Prov. iii. 9.

Presses burst out with new Wine°. Know, my Friends, that *GOD* hath given you your Corn, and your Wine, and your Oil^p, and hath multiplied your Wool and your Flax. Lay by therefore for charitable Uses, as *GOD* hath prospered you^q, and as you hope and desire he should prosper you in Years to come: Otherwise you may chance to have *calculated* your *Interests* very wrong, and may find to your Cost, that as *there is that scattereth, and yet greatly increaseth*, so *there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to Poverty*^r. Once more,

3. LET me plead from the *particular Crisis* to which *this Affair* is now brought, which is such, that it *must be determined* by what is *immediately*, or at least *quickly*, done.

THE *Scheme* of a COUNTY HOSPITAL among us was thought of, and hinted at *long ago*; but it was then looked upon as a *Thing to be wished*, rather than attempted and hoped. The *Attempt* is now courageously and vigorously made, and *no inconsiderable Sum* has already been *subscribed* for that Purpose: And what is *much more*

° Prov. iii. 10.

^p Hof. ii. 8.

^q 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

^r Prov. xi. 24.

more important than any Subscription yet made, many of the Nobility and Gentry of the County, who have not yet ascertained Particulars, have declared their Approbation of the general Design, and their Resolution to favour it. It is greatly for their Honour to have done it, and we have Reason to bless GOD who hath put it into their Hearts: But it would be most ungenerous and unreasonable, to leave the whole Burthen upon them. It is the general Concurrence of the Inhabitants of this County, which must give the greatest Strength, Stability, and Extent to the Scheme. Let me therefore intreat your cheerful and resolute Concurrence. Suffer not this amiable Infant, (if I may be allowed the Expression,) to be deserted, and die, for Want of due Support in its tenderest State; nor let it be said, in Hezekiah's Words, that when brought to the Birth, there was not Strength and Assistance to bring it forth^f. Lend your charitable Aid now, if you ever purpose to do it at all; for if it drop now, we cannot expect ever to see it revived: Since the Defeat of this Attempt, so far advanced, and so warmly solicited, will be looked upon as a Demonstration to many, that the Thing cannot be effected; whereas it

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is most evident, that if it *miscarry*, must not be charged on *Providence*, but on *ourselves*. Nothing surely can *prevent its Success*, humanly speaking, but *such Dispositions*, as I am *unwilling* on this *Occasion* so much as to *name*, in those who should be *Leaders in every good Work*.

If these *shameful Causes* should prevail to *frustrate all*, we love our *Neighbours*, our *Brethren*, and the *Publick* too well, *not to lament it*. But let us at least have so much *Regard* to the *Credit of our Characters*, and the *Peace of our Consciences*, as to shew, that it fails not for *Want of our Concurrence*. I know, it is but *very little* in *Comparison* that *we can do*. We are by no means *distinguished for our Wealth*, and we have of course our *Burthens* and *Expences* peculiar to us, as a *Society of Dissenters*. Nevertheless, let us *judge equitably*, as to what we are *able to contribute*, and let us *do it chearfully*: Rejoicing in this, that we act in the *Presence of a most gracious and merciful Father*, who, *where there is a willing Mind*, *accepts a Man according to what he hath*, and *not according to what he hath not*^t.

LET not therefore any of the *poorer Part of Mankind*, who often have as *generous and as compassionate Hearts* as any which

which are to be found on Earth, be discouraged, because they have not their *Guineas*, or even their *Crowns* to give on this noble Occasion. Were great Numbers to join their *smaller Contributions* thro' such a County as this, it would swell to a very considerable Sum. And which is the most agreeable Thought of all, *each* would have his Part in the Honour and Pleasure of doing Something towards helping forward so worthy a Design. And I am sure, it is the Part of *Humanity* to wish, that those, who move in a lower Sphere, may share with the Rich and Great in such Pleasures as these; tho' they cannot in many others, much more expensive, yet not equally exquisite and refined. The Joys of *Liberality*, and the Delights of *Benevolence*, were intended by the great Author of our Nature, like the *Light of the Sun*, to be the Portion of the whole Species, and to extend themselves to the lowest of Mankind.

I hope therefore that *all*, who can without great Inconvenience to themselves and their Families afford it, will do something to promote this generous Scheme. But I would remind those of you in particular, who are in more distinguished Circumstances of Life, that you are in the Sight of God and Man obliged to distinguish yourselves in the various Exercises of *Liberality*. I

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have a great *Authority* to warrant me to do it, and I think it one of the truest Offices of *Friendship* which a *Minister* can perform to such, to charge them that are *Rich in this World*, that they trust not in *uncertain Riches*, but in the living *GOD*; and that, as they desire any well-grounded *Trust* in him, they practically acknowledge him as the *Great LORD OF ALL*, by being *rich in good Works*, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, so laying up in *Store* for themselves a good *Foundation* against the *Time to come*, that they may lay hold on *Eternal Life*^u. And if there are any of you whose *Riches* *GOD* hath lately increased, either by causing your *Grounds* to bring forth plentifully, or by giving a favourable *Turn* to the *Commodities* in which you deal, or by any other *Methods* of sudden *Prosperity*; as I may say to you, *I come in a good Day*, so I should think, you had Reason to fear that very *Prosperity* were a *Curse*, and might be the Means of *Destruction* to you, if you did not feel your *Hearts* as it were melted by it, and disposed to flow forth in the *Streams* of large and chearful *Beneficence*. I would rather hope, that *GOD* has been providing an easy and abundant *Accession* for this publick

^u 1 Tim. vi. 17,—19.

lick Charity, by the *Accession* he has been making to your *Capacity* of supporting it.

I WOULD also particularly beseech *those* of you, who are of *tender Constitutions*, and know, by your own frequent Experience, the *Calamity of Illness*, to pity the Sorrows you have so often felt, and to shew a Readiness to *relieve the Poor* who are labouring under them; as you desire that the *Eye of Mercy* may be directed toward you, and that the *Arm of GOD* may be extended for your Support, if *such Distresses* should return upon you. And I hope, any whom God may *lately* have raised up to *Life and Health*, when they seemed in the *extreamest Danger* of being deprived of the *Residue of their Years*, will hear how loudly he calls upon them, to present a *Thank-offering*, so suitable to the Nature of that Favour which they have received.

To conclude all, I would beseech *every one of you* who hear me this Day, both *High and Low, Rich and Poor together*, that they aid this good Work by their *Prayers*: A Contribution, by which some of the *Poorest* may be *eminently helpful*; for *such* are often peculiarly *rich in Faith*^w, and high in the Favour of the King of Heaven.

AND may HE, the Great *Patron* of the *Afflicted*, and of *those that pity them*,
say

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say AMEN to our *united Petitions!* May He graciously *guide the Minds* of those, who are *concerting the Scheme*, and ripening it for fuller Execution! May He *open the Hearts* of those, who shall be *applied to*, that they may give *freely and chearfully*, in *full Proportion* to what He, the only perfect Judge, certainly knows to be *their respective Abilities!* And may He abundantly *reward all*, who from worthy Principles *shall assist* in so excellent a Work, with *Health* in their Persons, *Prosperity* in their Families, *Peace* in their Minds, and at length, thro' the Merits and Grace of the Great Redeemer, with an *Eternal Abode* in that World, where the great Physician of Souls having fully accomplished his healing Purposes, *the Inhabitant shall not say, I am sick^x!* Nevertheless, the *Grace of Charity* shall *live and reign there^y*; tho' such *Methods of expressing it*, as I have now been recommending, be *happily superseded*: Nor is it at all improbable, that *some*, whom we have for a few Days lodged in our *House of Mercy* here, may *there*, as our LORD himself expresses it, *receive us into Everlasting Habitations^z*.
AMEN.

^x Isai. xxxiii. 24.

^y 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

^z Luke xvi. 9.

